



FORT BELKNAP TRIBAL CHILDCARE PROGRAM

FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY

FORT BELKNAP AGENCY
656 AGENCY MAIN STREET
HARLEM, MONTANA 59526

February 24, 2021

Ellen Wheatley

Director, Office of Child Care

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families

330 C Street, SW – Room 4522, Washington, DC 20001

Greetings,

The Fort Belknap Child Care Program acknowledges our receipt of the CRRSA allocation for our Tribe. As you know, our program only exists to better serve our families in their endeavor for self-reliance. The Tribe wholly supports our Child Care Providers as they strengthen their programs to better meet the needs of our children. This Funding opportunity will be very helpful in assisting our current goals of providing essential services to our families and providers impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Please accept the Fort Belknap's sincere gratitude for this funding. In this letter you will find the proposed plan of how the Fort Belknap Child Care Program will utilize this funding opportunity.

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies):

- The program will use the CRRSA funding to provide assistance to Health Care Providers, First Responders and the essential workforce of the Fort Belknap Indian Community without regard to the income eligibility requirements.
- Continued payments and subsidy assistance to child care providers who are impacted by decreased enrollment or closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Program will provide subsidy to relative/kinship providers. In this time of uncertainty and the displacement of families/children due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Fort Belknap Child Care Program will implement the eligibility of Relative/Kinship care for our families. We have determined that certain Health and Safety requirements will be waived.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices:

- It will be the goal of the Fort Belknap Child Care Program to coordinate and consult with the local Disaster Response team to envelop the Child Care Program. We will coordinate with the response team of the inclusion of our program, providers and families into the

Tribe's Emergency Disaster Policies and Procedures. The program will utilize consultants to update our current Emergency Preparedness Policy to include a responsive procedure which addresses Virus Mitigation.

- The program will afford the child care providers the critical trainings needed to assure virus mitigation policies and practices are implemented by our workforce.
- The Fort Belknap Child Care Program will provide T/A for providers to implement and improve upon their emergency preparedness plans to include Virus Mitigation.
- Provide protective apparatus and sanitation/cleaning supplies to our families and providers
- To assist in the reopening of our tribally operated child care center, the program will be purchasing the necessary equipment and various safety upgrades to conform with the safety standards set forth by the tribe.

Grants or assistance to Child Care Providers (other than subsidy):

- Assist providers with the technological equipment needed to successfully complete the professional development training and skills needed to provide high quality care for our children
- Work with our State Child Care Partner to enhance our current tribal licensing program, work with our partners to establish and maintain strong policies and procedures throughout the program spectrum.
- Provide Mini-Grants to providers for the purpose of improving the quality of care of children in the form of incentives for professional development and obtaining additional trainings that are offered.
- Contract and consult with mental health consultants that would serve the needs of families, providers and our tribally operated center.
- Contract and consult with our local language/cultural preservation team to develop curriculum for a culturally diverse child care program.

Assistance to Providers Not Participated in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic:

- The Fort Belknap Child Care Program has amended the 2020-2022 Child Care Plan to include Family/kinship care to our families experiencing displacement and the unavailability of child care services during the Pandemic. The Fort Belknap Child Care Program will encourage and provide incentives to our Family/Kinship providers by providing assistance/grants to improve the quality of care for our children. The program will encourage these providers to become tribally licensed providers with training opportunities, sanitation and cleaning supplies, technological equipment and other needs deemed necessary during this pandemic.

Other Use of Funds:

- The Fort Belknap Child Care Program will use a portion of the CRRSA Funds to Construct/Renovate the Fort Belknap Hays Head Start Kitchen on the southern end of

the Fort Belknap Reservation. The program plans on building an addition onto the Fort Belknap Hays Head Start Building with CCDF Discretionary funds for a child care center. In discussion with the Architect/Engineer it was determined that the renovation to the kitchen is necessary to accommodate the additional children of the Child Care Center.

- The Fort Belknap Child Care Program will enhance and execute our monitoring and compliance policy to better suit the needs of our children and providers.

Thank you for your immediate consideration, If you have any questions please call me at (406) 353-8493 or email me at tanya.cochran@ftbelknap.org

/s/

Tanya Cochran, Director
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